



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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PRESS RELEASE

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PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT ANNOUNCES RELEASE OF I-CARE, AUTOMATED SELF-HELP FOR GUARDIANSHIP OF MINOR CASES

The Probate and Family Court Administrative Office announces the release of I-CARE, an automated self-help program for the completion of the forms necessary to file a guardianship of minor case in the Probate and Family Court.

The self-help program allows litigants and lawyers to complete the forms on a computer, by moving from computer screen to computer screen answering basic questions about themselves and the child or children. Upon completion of the program, the litigant or lawyer has all of the necessary pleadings and instructions for filing a Guardianship of Minor case.

“The guardianship module is another step forward in our goal of assisting litigants to get timely and effective access to the Probate and Family Court,” said Chief Justice Sean M. Dunphy. “Over four thousand four hundred (4,400) Guardianship of Minor cases were filed in the Probate and Family Court in the fiscal year ended June 30, 2005. These are relatives and others stepping in to provide for the care and well being of a child when the parents are unable or unfit to do so. The prospective guardians often have limited resources and limited knowledge of the legal system. In fiscal year 2005, 77% of the Guardianship of Minor cases were filed by unrepresented litigants. A typical Guardianship of Minor case requires the completion of at least ten court forms. For those relatives and others who are filing to provide for the care of a child, this program will provide needed assistance.”

The program is available on the Internet at www.icandocs.org/ma and at public access computers at the Registries of the Probate and Family Court in the Bristol Probate and Family Court in Taunton, the Essex Probate and Family Court in Salem, the Hampden Probate and Family Court in Springfield, the Middlesex Probate and Family Court in Cambridge, the Norfolk Probate and Family Court in Canton, the Plymouth Probate and Family Court in Brockton, and the Suffolk Probate and Family Court in Boston. In the near future, public access computers will also be installed in the Essex Probate and Family Court in Lawrence and in the Worcester Probate and Family Court in Worcester. The program will soon be available in Spanish and Portuguese. I-CARE was funded in part by federal grant funds allocated by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts through a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services.